Small Victories Can Yield Life’s Biggest Lessons

“In 1991, as an ignorant but well-meaning junior at Swarthmore, I moved to Chester for the summer to begin my Lang Project: working with a neighborhood to design and construct a children’s playground. I knew next to nothing about how to build coalitions, navigate neighborhood politics, get permits through unhelpful bureaucracies, or fundraise. I floundered badly my first few weeks into the project. But by the end of the summer, we got the playground finished and I found I had learned as much by discovering what doesn’t work as I did by finding out what does. They say good judgment comes from experience and experience comes from bad judgment. Although no longer working on inner city development, I still use many of those lessons in my career today. For the last ten years, I have been in the solar energy field (I work for Solaria, a solar panel manufacturer in Silicon Valley). I spend much of my time working in coalitions going head to head against the fossil fuel industry and utilities to enact policies to help the US move toward renewable energy. The Lang Opportunity Grant was a tremendous foothold into the world of advocacy and organizing and, for me, proof that some of life’s biggest lessons can be found in even the smallest of victories.”

David Hochschild
Class of ’93
Civic Engagement, Education & Youth Media  
*Joslyn Young ’10, Molly Weston ’10 and Ellen Donnelly ’10*

Joslyn Young ’10, Molly Weston ’10 and Ellen Donnelly ’10 Lang Projects used innovative forms of education, civic engagement, and media production to help foster a younger generation of community change agents.

**Joslyn Young ’10** interned with three organizations: the Learning Lab at WHYY, Chinatown Youth Radio Project (the LOS project of Hansi Lo Wang, ’09), and Chester PAL during the summer of 2008. At the Learning Lab, Joslyn offered instruction and assistance on film production to an international cadre of young people. With Chinatown Youth Radio Project, Joslyn recruited applicants, contacted community partners, wrote program curriculum and handled logistical matters. While working with Chester PAL, Joslyn engaged in grant writing and curriculum development. Early in summer 2009, Joslyn worked with a group of 10 teens from Chester, four young men and six young women, as well as a core group of college student volunteers, as part of her Lang Project, called “Voices for Change.” The Voices for Change (VFC) Summer Change” (VFC) Summer Institute. VFC gives high school students in Chester, PA the opportunity to share their stories with a broader audience through media production projects. In collaboration with the Chester Police Activities League (PAL), Swarthmore College, and Team Making A Change (MAC), the VFC Summer Institute gives teens experience as media makers. The primary goal of the program is to offer the resources and instruction needed to establish a group of youth media producers, giving teens an avenue to share their stories and the stories of their community. Of her experience, Joslyn writes, “The experience has been incredibly rewarding and challenging, and both the teens and I hope that program is able to continue in the future.”

**Ellen Donnelly ’10** worked with Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) in summer 2008. As an intern, Ellen participated in two projects: the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund and the TANF/Faith Based Community Organization Workforce Collaborations project. In the former project, Ellen helped in the evaluation of the use of 1151 interfaith grants awarded to houses of worship on the Gulf Coast. In the latter, Ellen furthered a literature review of current best practices for faith-based/workforce investment board collaborations, or types of public/private partnership that assist TANF recipients to move off of welfare to self-sufficiency.

The first phase of Ellen’s LOS project, “READY (Remaking Engagement, Action, and Democracy through Youth) for Chester” involved 270 7th

(cont’d on p. 3)
and 8th graders in the Chester Community Charter School and consisted of a curriculum and practice activities that lasted from October 6, 2008 through November 4 2008. Students were enabled to participate in politics on a national scale during this historic election season through the curriculum supplements in social studies classes, a voter registration and identification distribution day, and a culminating mock election. Ellen writes, “Given the students’ overall enthusiasm for the election and their opinions, I also believe I have achieved my goal of helping to instill interest, efficacy, and hope for making democratic change within many of these 270 middle school students.”

In the summer of 2008, Molly Weston ‘10 worked with the Kentucky League of Women Voters (LWVKY), an organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy. Molly registered voters with the League at two immigrant naturalization ceremonies, revamped the LWVKY’s website, created a new membership brochure and initiated the development of databases of contacts for relevant student organizations at the biggest universities in the state of Kentucky. As a result of this internship, she now serves as LWVKY’s internet director. Her Lang project, Extraordinary Possibilities (EP), kicked off in Spring 2009. EP is an after school civics program at Chester High School that brings Swarthmore volunteers and Chester students together to learn about activism and citizenship. Molly writes, “It is our core belief that American democracy requires each of us, in turn, to be participants in and students of our government, but also to critically evaluate its actions and goals and work to shape those activities.” During the pilot, a team of Swarthmore volunteers taught two units, one on the American presidency and one on the nature of American identity. In response to the lessons of the pilot, Molly spent summer 2009 revamping the program and designing an original seven-session curriculum to teach students how to become effective advocates for causes of their choice.

Invitation

Got a “class note” or reflection about your LOS project to share? A story about how the experience as a Lang Scholar influenced the course of you and your life? Please email Jennifer Magee jmagee1@swarthmore.edu with your submission. Note: Dogfish Stories is e-published bi-annually (mid-March and mid-October).

LOS Class Notes

Albert Bui ’02 writes, “I tried to start a community service project in Philly to teach high school students to run an internet service provider from their school. My frustrations trying to work with the school board, PTA and other stakeholders made me realize that I was ill suited to be an external agent of change. I came to the conclusion change is better done from the inside. Today, I am passionate about health care and want to figure out how to change the business of health care so that we can deliver services more efficiently. In my opinion, there is no silver bullet that will revolutionize the industry. What is needed is a concerted effort by lots of people to make each corner of the industry rationale and efficient. My goal is to become an expert in one area of health care and make that corner the best it can be.

Kylah Field ’09 combined her commitment to women and education in the Young Women’s Resource Center of Chester (YWRC). YWRC is a place committed to the well-being of women that operates out of the YWCA in neighboring Chester, Pennsylvania. The mission statement of the YWRC is to provide a space to foster hope, confidence, voice and change in the lives of women. It is the first and only women’s resource center in Chester and its activities are based entirely on the ideas and feedback from the women in the community. Kylah had been working on the project since the summer of 2007.
Cultural Revitalization in Romania
Liz Crow ’09

“Together with Professor Georghe Dolinski, a well-respected educator among academic and literary institutions in the country, Liz Crow ’09 planned a curriculum entitled Steps to Ourselves, which leveraged the town’s local heritage site -- a 500 year old monastery with rare exterior frescoes, pictured above -- for local students’ personal-history art projects. The project was completed with a city-wide student art exposition, attended by families and members of the regional school board who decided to adopt and expand the curriculum for future use. Now under the permanent leadership of Dolinski, the curriculum continues as a series of “cultural awareness” projects each semester, ranging from projects about national poetry, political leadership, to Romanian folklore. Part of the project process involves financial planning and resource-gathering for project supplied and each presentation. Liz notes that one of the most positive - albeit unexpected - results of the programs has been a heightened sense of responsibility within the students to uphold standards of financial transparency and honesty…a big step in the right direction for this part of the country, notorious for its severe economic corruption. Currently, the Romania-based partners are securing permissions to officially format the project's website, www.stepstoourselves.org, which will serve as a virtual portal for art-sharing between students in Romania and elementary schools in the United States. Lastly, the town’s energy and support of the project led to an even more lasting initiative, the creation of their very first self-sustainable ethnographic museum: The Village Ethnographic House Museum of Arbore. Today, the Museum (a relocated 300-year-old traditional Romanian cabin with three rooms) which will house ethnographic artifacts from the village as well as documents of its founding, development, and role in Romania's national history is being built. Linked with the local monastery and the school curriculum, the museum will provide a critical link between the youth and elderly of Arbore for financial sustainability of the project, and also for sustainability of the town itself in the memory of its younger generations.”

LOS Class Notes
(cont’d)

Allan Friedman, PhD ’02 writes “I’d be happy to help advise current scholars interested in an academic approach to public policy. My current work and expertise is largely in the technology policy domain...I'll be moving to DC in October to help start a new Center on Technology and Innovation at the Brookings Institution. I will be the Research Director of the new center, and I've also been named a Brookings Fellow.” Allan earned a PhD in Public Policy from the Kennedy School, a Post-doc in the Harvard computer science department, and fellowships at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and the Berkman Center for Internet and Society.

David Zipper ’00 was a co-recipient of a Lang Scholarship in 1998 to found Empowered Painters, a non-profit organization training inner-city Philadelphia residents to work as house painters in the suburbs. Ten years after graduating from Swarthmore, David's passion for urban development endures. He currently resides in Washington DC, where he serves as Director of Business Development and Strategy in the mayor's office. David also sits on the board of StartingBloc, an international non-profit organization that--much like the Lang program--helps young people become social entrepreneurs and change agents.
LOS Alumni Developments

The LOS Project File

We’ve created a comprehensive list of all Lang Scholars from the inception of the LOS program (1981 – 2010). A searchable online database – available to LOS Alumni – is currently in the works which will include each Scholar’s name, genre of project, project title and description. In the meantime, a companion DVD has been created and is available upon request.

10-Year LOS Retrospective

You may have been contacted by Dr. Andrea Taylor and/or Dr. Germaine Edwards of Temple University, the independent researchers to conduct the 10-year retrospective of the LOS program. Many thanks to those of you who have completed the online survey and/or interview! Haven’t completed the survey yet? The survey can be found at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HWJ95GK.

LOS Alumni Facebook Group

To date, 77 of the 147 Lang Scholar Alumni have joined the “Swarthmore Lang Opportunity Scholars” Facebook group. Be sure to check the Facebook feed for news about the program, upcoming events and opportunities to connect with old friends!

Lang Scholars in Graduate School

Kylah Field ‘09 University of Pennsylvania, education
Ellen Donnelly, University of Pennsylvania, political science
Dan Hammer ‘07, University of Maryland, spatial analytics
Camila Leiva ‘09 Long Island University, TESOL
Bella Liu ‘07, Harvard Medical School
Inessa Lurye ‘06, Harvard University, public policy and business administration
Sybille Ngo Nyock ‘08, UCLA, political science
David Owen ‘06, University of North Carolina, journalism and mass communication
Anna Torres ‘07, Harvard Divinity School
Molly Weston ‘10 Yale University, law
Toby Wu ‘09 Stanford University, elementary education

Come Visit the Lang Center!

Pictured above from left to right: Jennifer Magee, Cynthia Jetter ’74, Elizabeth Crow ’09 and Tom Liu ’12 catch up “on the porch” of the Lang Center, 3-5 Whittier Place.

In Gratitude

Heartfelt thanks to Eugene M. Lang ’38 for his continued support and generosity to the Lang Opportunity Scholarship Program and Swarthmore College.

Many thanks to the contributors of this newsletter!